United Nations

Daily Highlights

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FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council tonight unanimously declares Srebrenica and surroundings a safe area; demands immediate cessation of attacks by Bosnian Serb para-military units against that town; asks Secretary-General to increase UNPROFOR presence and decides to send Council mission to the area "to ascertain situation"; meanwhile, UNPROFOR prepares to move into Srebrenica after Bosnian Serbs agree, in principle, to deployment.

+ United Nations proposals to find solution to political crisis in Haiti "unfortunately have not received a positive reply", says Dante Caputo, Special Envoy of Secretaries-General of the United Nations and Organization of American States; to travel to New York and Washington for consultations.

+ Secretary-General, continuing Italian stay, visits Vatican and San Marino; meets Pope John Paul II and Captains Regents of San Marino.

+ Azerbaijan asks Security Council to demand that Armenia end its armed aggression and withdraw troops from "occupied Azerbaijani territory".

+ Planning Committee for Vienna World Conference on Human Rights will focus on final outcome of that Conference at two-week session in Geneva beginning Monday, 19 April.

+ Commission on Transnational Corporations, ending nineteenth session at Headquarters, stresses importance of foreign direct investment in privatization and in integrating economies in transition.

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The Security Council tonight declared Srebrenica and its surroundings a safe area and demanded an immediate end to Bosnian Serb attacks on the town. It did so by unanimously adopting a resolution sponsored by Venezuela on behalf of the non-aligned members of the Council.

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The Council asked the Secretary-General to increase the presence of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Srebrenica in order to safeguard the civilian population, and to report urgently to the Council.

The Council also decided to send, as soon as possible, a mission of members of the Security Council to Bosnia and herzegovina "to ascertain the situation", and to report to the Council. It demanded unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance to all parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and affirmed that such impediments constituted a grave breach of international humanitarian law.

The Council also condemned and rejected the "deliberate actions of the Bosnian Serb party to force the evacuation of the civilian population from Srebrenica and its surrounding areas" as part of its overall "abhorrent campaign of 'ethnic cleansing', and reaffirmed that those who committed such acts would be individually responsible for them.

The Council further demanded that all parties guarantee the safety and full freedom of movement of UNPROFOR and of all other United Nations personnel, as well as members of humanitarian organizations.

Earlier today, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) had ordered troops to prepare to move into Srebrenica, which has been under attack from Bosnian Serb forces, according to a statement issued by UNPROFOR. The order followed contacts between Force Commander Lieutenant-General Lars-Eric Wahlgren, the President of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic, and Radovan Karadzic, leader of the Bosnian Serbs, indicating the willingness of the Bosnian Serb authorities to authorize, in principle, the deployment of United Nations troops.

General Wahlgren has been in touch with the Serbian President as part of United Nations efforts to avert a major humanitarian tragedy in Srebrenica, the statement said. UNPROFOR has been trying to get the Bosnian Serbs to agree to the deployment of its troops in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina, following Security Council directives on 3 March and 3 April for UNPROFOR to increase its presence in the area.

General Wahlgren has ordered a company from the second Canadian battalion to move immediately to Tuzla, to be ready to enter Srebrenica tomorrow morning. United Nations observers said the town had been shelled today.

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Unfortunately, the proposals made by the United Nations to find a solution to the political crisis in Haiti have not received a positive reply, said Dante Caputo, the Special Envoy of the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS), in a statement issued tonight at Headquarters.

Mr. Caputo, who is currently in Port-au-Prince, will be returning to New York to consult with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the

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Secretary-General of the OAS, before going to Washington. The current situation requires a spirit of cooperation and flexibility, adds Mr. Caputo.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, continuing his eight-day Italian visit, today went to the Vatican, where he met with the Secretary of State. They discussed the forthcoming Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1995, United Nations peace-keeping operations and refugee issues.

The Secretary-General also met with Pope John Paul II, who gave him a check for $300,000 in response to the appeal launched by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Secretary-General invited the Pontiff to visit Headquarters and they discussed the International Year of the Family.

The Secretary-General then travelled to San Marino, where he met with the Captains Regents of the Republic, several ministers and the country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations. Stressing that equality among Member States was one of the main principles of the Organization, the Secretary-General said San Marino "is ancient and small but is equal to the other members".

The Secretary-General was scheduled to return to Rome this evening.

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Azerbaijan has asked the Security Council to take "urgent measures" to end the bloodshed and save the lives of hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani civilians.

Hassan A. Hassanov, the Azerbaijani Permanent Representative to the United Nations asked, in a letter to the Security Council, that it demand that Armenia immediately halt its armed aggression and withdraw all its troops from "occupied Azerbaijani territories" and that sanctions be imposed against Armenia if it does not comply. He asked that the Council continue its consideration of the situation, since Armenia had ignored the Council President's statement of 6 April and was stepping up its aggression.

Mr. Hassanov pledged that Azerbaijan would "refrain from any action that will obstruct a peaceful solution to the problem" and continue peace talks.

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The final outcome of the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, to be held from 14 to 21 June in Vienna, will be the focus of discussion when the planning committee for the Conference begins a two-week session in Geneva on Monday, 19 April.

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The discussion will be based on the conclusions of the regional meetings for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean which have been held during the last six months as part of the preparations of the Conference. At its previous meeting the planning committee approved the draft rules of procedure for the Conference, but was unable to finalize a draft provisional agenda.

The Vienna Conference on Human Rights will assess the progress made in the protection and promotion of human rights since the adoption of the 1948 Universal Declaration and identify obstacles to further progress.

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The Commission on Transnational Corporations has stressed the importance of foreign direct investment in privatization and in integrating economies in transition into the world economy. The Commission took that action under one of two draft texts approved, as it completed its nineteenth session at Headquarters yesterday. Both drafts will be considered by the Economic and Social Council at a later date.

The Council would also ask the Secretary-General, in coordination with multilateral financial institutions, to give priority to strengthening technical cooperation to assist developing countries create a favourable investment climate, especially in the service sector.

The Commission recommended that the Secretary-General's report on the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) as relating to transnational corporations, be transmitted to the Commission for Sustainable Development for consideration.

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